



# EXECUTIVE REGULATION

Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Commission

No.: 27-89AMII

Effective Date:

3/22/92

TITLE: LOCAL AND NON-LOCAL TRAVEL GUIDELINES  
FOR THE FIRE AND RESCUE CORPORATIONS

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Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Commission Regulation on:

## LOCAL AND NON-LOCAL TRAVEL GUIDELINES FOR THE FIRE AND RESCUE CORPORATIONS

Issued by: Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Commission  
Regulation Number 27-89AMII

Authority: Code Section 21-4B(e)

Supersedes: Regulation Number 27-89AM

Council Review: Method (2) under Code Section 2A-15  
Register Volume 8, Issue 11

Effective Date: March 22, 1992

### SUMMARY:

The proposed regulation amends the policy for authorizing fire and rescue personnel to travel on official fire and rescue corporation business, and outlines the procedure for obtaining reimbursement of authorized expenses incurred while carrying out this official business. The Commission's policy parallels the County's Administrative Procedures for local and non-local travel, and its mileage, lodging, and meal reimbursement rates are also intended to be consistent with the amounts approved by the County Government for its employees.

### DEADLINES:

Montgomery County Fire Board Review: November 29, 1991  
Dept. of Fire and Rescue Services Review: Nov. 29, 1991  
Montgomery County Register Comment: November 29, 1991  
Fire and Rescue Corporations Comment: Nov. 29, 1991

### ADDRESS:

Send all comments pertaining to the proposed regulation to George A. Giebel, Chairman, Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Commission, 12th Floor, 101 Monroe Street, Rockville, MD 20850.

### STAFF:

For additional information, you may contact Beth Murphy, Administrative Specialist, Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Commission, on 217-2461.



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**BACKGROUND:** Each year, the County Council appropriates funds in the budgets of each of the independent fire and rescue corporations to provide for local and non-local travel for personnel while carrying out official duties beneficial to their corporations. The proposed regulation establishes guidelines for authorizing such travel, either locally (within a 75-mile radius of the County office building complex in Rockville, Maryland) or non-locally (outside the described 75-mile radius), and outlines a procedure for obtaining reimbursement of authorized expenses incurred. The guidelines describe the authorized purposes of this travel, modes of travel and mileage allowances, meals and lodging, and procedures for reimbursement of these expenses.

## Sec. 1. Purpose.

To establish the procedure for reimbursement of expenses incurred by fire and rescue personnel while on local and non-local travel necessary to perform authorized fire and rescue corporation or County business.

## Sec. 2. Applicability.

This regulation applies to all volunteer fire, rescue, and emergency medical service personnel of the independent fire and rescue Corporations in Montgomery County, employees of the Corporations, and employees of the Department of Fire and Rescue Services traveling on behalf of a Corporation. The guidelines as outlined in this regulation apply to reimbursement for expenses from Fire Tax District funds budgeted to the independent fire and rescue corporations.

## Sec. 3. Definitions.

- (a) Corporation. A fire or rescue Corporation established in the County, authorized to provide fire, rescue, or emergency medical services.
- (b) Corporation head. Individual (usually the Corporation's chief or president) designated as the approval/signature authority for fiscal or certification purposes.
- (c) Personnel. All volunteer fire, rescue, and emergency medical service providers, Corporation employees, employees of the Department of Fire and Rescue Services, and for the purposes of this regulation, members of Corporation governing bodies, traveling on behalf of a Corporation.



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(d) Local Travel. Official travel within a 75-mile radius of the County office building complex in Rockville, Maryland, including Baltimore and Annapolis.

(e) Non-Local Travel. Official travel outside of the 75-mile radius of the County office building complex in Rockville, Maryland.

## Sec. 4. Policy.

(a) General. It is the policy of the Fire and Rescue Commission to ensure that personnel are reimbursed for necessary and reasonable expenses incurred while on local or non-local travel in order to carry out official business, attend meetings or conferences, or attend schools or training sessions which directly benefit the fire and rescue service.

A specific amount is budgeted to the Corporations for local and non-local travel each year based on budget requests. After the budget is approved, the Corporations must manage local and non-local travel within this amount. Requests for reallocation of funds into the travel account (exceeding that originally budgeted) or out of the travel account to another part of the operating budget must receive prior approval of the Chairman of the Fire and Rescue Commission or his or her designee.

Travel must be approved by the designated Corporation head or his or her designee before it may be considered authorized travel for which tax funds may be used to pay or reimburse reasonable and necessary travel expenses. Corporations must exercise good judgment in expending County tax funds.

- (1) Only the actual, necessary and reasonable expenses which personnel incur while on authorized travel will be paid or reimbursed by tax funds.
- (2) The number of personnel sent at Corporation expense to conferences and conventions of professional associations must be limited to those whose presence is clearly justified and relevant to the policy objectives of the Corporation and the Fire and Rescue Commission.



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(3) There is no restriction or guaranteed approval for attendance of personnel at a conference or convention based solely upon rank or position held.

(b) Modes of Travel. In planning the travel, Corporations must select the most cost-effective mode which minimizes the time enroute to and from the destination. Personnel must receive the Corporation's permission to use a Corporation or County vehicle for official local or non-local travel. Mileage published by the American Automobile Association is used as the official measure of distance.

(1) Railroad and bus facilities may be used when practical.

(2) Air travel must be tourist or coach fare, using round trip or excursion rates whenever possible. If tourist or coach seats are unavailable, the consent of the Corporation head must be obtained before making reservations for first class accommodation.

(3) Public transportation vehicles such as bus, subway, and surface cars should be used for intracity transportation where feasible.

(4) Privately-owned vehicles may be used only if the Corporation head determines that it is advantageous, or when Corporation or County vehicles are unavailable.

(5) Taxicabs may be used for local travel when advantageous and when other suitable public, Corporation- or County-owned service is not readily available.

(6) Rental cars may be used if they are more economical or efficient than using taxicabs.

(c) Meals. Personnel will be reimbursed for food expenses during the period of travel for actual reasonable expenses, not to exceed the maximum daily amount set by the County. Receipts must be submitted for all meals purchased, along with the request for reimbursement. For local travel, the cost of meals is normally reimbursable only as outlined in this Procedure.



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- (1) If meals are included as part of a conference fee, the maximum daily meal allowance limit will be correspondingly reduced. Personnel are expected to take advantage of this pre-arrangement, rather than purchase meals from other sources. Reimbursement for the latter will be paid only after specific approval by the Corporation head.
- (2) When personnel are authorized to attend an event where meals are provided as part of the function but the cost has not been included, the cost of the meal is reimbursable, subject to approval of the Corporation head.
- (d) Local Travel. It is the Fire and Rescue Commission's policy that the Corporations must use, to the maximum extent practical, Corporation- or County-owned vehicles for official local travel.
  - (1) When personnel are authorized to travel in a Corporation or County vehicle, that vehicle must be serviced for gas and oil at the Corporation or at a County service facility, as appropriate, at the beginning of the trip. If the vehicle requires gas and oil or service during the trip and it cannot be serviced at a Corporation or County facility, personnel will be reimbursed for the cost of gas, oil, repairs, or other necessary vehicle expenses. Receipts and invoices are required.
  - (2) Privately-owned vehicles should be used only when the Corporation head determines that it is advantageous to the Corporation or to the County, or when Corporation or County vehicles are not available.
  - (3) The Fire and Rescue Commission's reimbursement rate is based upon the County's mileage allowance rate for employees using their privately-owned vehicles on authorized government business in the Washington Metropolitan Area. Personnel who use their private vehicles for official business will receive this mileage allowance, as well as reimbursement of expenses for parking and toll charges.



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- (4) With the approval of the Corporation head, personnel may receive mileage reimbursement for the use of private cars when they are authorized to participate in official business or meetings at locations which are not their normal duty stations.
- (5) For insurance purposes, travel as part of an individual's fire or rescue-related duties is considered official business.
- (e) Non-Local Travel. The guidelines listed below apply only to personnel on Corporation-authorized non-local travel.
  - (1) The maximum expense reimbursable for the use of privately-owned vehicles for travel out of state must not exceed the cost of air travel at the coach rate.
  - (2) Personnel will be reimbursed for expenses for laundry or valet service on non-local travel of 5 days or more. Personnel will be reimbursed only for the expenses incurred for those services which were essential to the transaction of official Corporation or County business.
  - (3) Personnel who buy more than \$500.00 in travelers checks for authorized expenses during the travel period may be reimbursed for the service charge upon furnishing proof of the expenditure.
  - (4) Personnel who buy trip cancellation insurance for airline tickets purchased in advance to receive a discount fare may be reimbursed for the expense upon furnishing proof of the insurance purchase.
- (f) Lodging. Only actual and necessary expenses are allowed for lodging. Reasonable judgment should be used in making a choice of accommodations.
  - (1) Charges will only be reimbursed at the single room rate. If this rate cannot be established when personnel submit travel expense reimbursement requests for double occupancy, the Corporation head may determine the amount of the lodging bill to be reimbursed.



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- (2) If the event is scheduled to convene at a time that would require personnel to leave home earlier than 6:00 AM on that day, they will be reimbursed for the previous night's lodging.
- (3) If the event concludes too late for personnel to return home at a reasonable hour, they will be reimbursed for lodging for that evening.
- (g) Other Reimbursable Expenses. Personnel may receive reimbursement of expenditures for the services described below.
  - (1) Tips and Gratuities. Reasonable amounts will be paid or reimbursed for tips and gratuities paid to service providers while on official travel. Tips or gratuities involving meals should not exceed 15% of the meal cost.
  - (2) Sundry Expenses. Fees charged for conference registration will be reimbursed. Reimbursement for local and long-distance telephone calls and telegraph charges are allowed for official business only.
- (h) Non-Allowed Travel Expenses. Only those travel expenses that personnel actually incur which are essential to the transaction of official Corporation or County business will be reimbursed. Valid travel expenses not covered in this regulation must be supported by receipts when submitted to the Corporation for approval.
  - (1) Mileage reimbursement will not be allowed for travel between an individual's residence and duty station.
  - (2) Purchase of personal items, alcoholic beverages, entertainment expenses, and expenses of family members are non-allowable travel expenses.

## Sec. 5. Procedure.

- (a) If advance travel funds are required for attendance at an event, personnel must submit a request for such funds (Travel Authorization Request form) to the Corporation head or his or her designee prior to the departure date. The amount of the advance funds is limited to a reasonable estimate of the allowable expenses.



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- (b) Personnel must obtain vouchers or receipts for all authorized travel expenditures for which they intend to request reimbursement.
- (c) Personnel must submit these vouchers or receipts for authorized travel expenditures and a Travel Expense Voucher form with requests for reimbursement.
- (d) Personnel must refund all unused advance travel funds to the Corporation head within 10 days of their return.
- (e) The Corporation head or his or her designee must verify all documentation before authorizing any travel reimbursement.
- (f) The Corporation must maintain accurate and complete file records of all travel expenditures for a period of five years from the date of the expenditure.

## Sec. 6. Responsibilities.

- (a) Personnel must obtain and submit to the Corporation head all receipts and an accounting of actual travel expenses incurred when requesting reimbursement.
- (b) Personnel must return any excess advance funds to the Corporation.
- (c) The Corporation head is responsible for the daily administration of his or her Corporation's travel expenses and for ensuring that these expenditures are consistent with the funds budgeted for the current fiscal year.
  - (1) The Corporation head must ensure full, accurate, and timely reporting and records maintenance of travel expenses.
  - (2) The Corporation head must report any over-expenditure of the amount allocated for non-local travel to the Fire and Rescue Commission for management review and appropriate action.
- (d) The Chairman of the Fire and Rescue Commission must approve any of the following changes before incurring the expense:



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- (1) change in travel from what was approved in the budget to another destination;
  - (2) change in the number of people scheduled for the trip; and
  - (3) change in the amount of funds approved for a trip.
- (e) The Finance Department may audit travel expenditures to ensure compliance with the policies outlined in this regulation and to ensure that these expenditures remain within the funds allocated for the current fiscal year.
- (f) The Fire and Rescue Commission will notify the Corporations when the County Government changes the amounts to be reimbursed for meals, lodging, or other travel expenses.

## Sec. 7. Severability.

If a court of final appeal holds that any part of this regulation is invalid, that ruling does not affect the validity of other parts of the regulation.

## Sec. 8. Effective Date.

This regulation is effective 30 days after Council adoption or 90 days after Council receipt if the Council takes no action within 60 days of receipt.

Attest:

George A. Giebel / BM  
George A. Giebel, Chairman  
Fire and Rescue Commission

12/23/91  
Date

0921d BFM rev 12/13/91

Approved as to form and legality  
Montgomery County, Md. County Attorney's Office

By: James J. Kurran